


A silver metal spiral binding is visible on the left side of the page, looping through a series of holes in the brown cover.

Do you think language has changed
drastically in the past 5-10 years?

Why or why not?

WRITING WARM-UP
(5 MINUTES)



What is the English that
Shakespeare used?? It makes no
sense...

Shakespeare's Language

- Shakespeare did NOT write in “Old English.”
- Old English is the language of Beowulf:
Hwaet! We Gardena in geardagum
Ʒeodcyninga Ʒrym gefrunon
Hu ưa æƷelingas ellen fremedon!



(Hey! We have heard of the glory of the Spear-Danes in the old days, the kings of tribes, how noble princes showed great courage!)

Shakespeare's Language

- Shakespeare did not write in “Middle English.”
- Middle English is the language of Chaucer, the author of *The Canterbury Tales*:



Whan that Aprill, with his shoures soote
The droghte of March hath perced to the roote
And bathed every veyne in swich licour,
Of which vertu engendred is the flour;

The General Prologue

Original Middle English:

- Whan that Aprill, with his
shoures soote
The droghte of March
hath perced to the roote
And bathed every veyne
in swich licour,
Of which vertu engendred
is the flour;

Modern Translation

- When fair April with his
showers sweet,
Has pierced the drought
of March to the root's feet
And bathed each vein in
liquid of such power,
Its strength creates the
newly springing flower;

<http://www.breme.demon.co.uk/chaucer.htm>

Shakespeare's Language

- Shakespeare wrote in “Early Modern English.”
- EME was not very different from “Modern English,” except that it had some old holdovers.

• The Shakespeare Glossary

<http://www.bardweb.net/grammar/04gloss.html>



• Omissions

Again, for the sake of his poetry, Shakespeare often left out letters, syllables, and whole words. These omissions really aren't that much different from the way we speak today. We say:

"Been to class yet?"

"No. Heard Miss T's givin' a test."

"Wha'sup wi'that?"

We leave out words and parts of words to speed up our speech. If we were speaking in complete sentences, we would say:

"Have you been to class yet?"

"No, I have not been to class. I heard that Ms. Torresani is giving a test today."

"What is up with that?"

- A few examples of Shakespearean omissions/contractions follow:

'tis ~ it is

ope ~ open

o'er ~ over

gi' ~ give

ne'er ~ never

i' ~ in

e'er ~ ever

oft ~ often

e'en ~ even

Shakespeare's Language

- Shakespeare coined many words we still use today:

- Critical
- Majestic
- Dwindle
- Fashionable
- Embrace (as a noun)
- Vulnerable



Shakespeare's Language

- one fell swoop
- flesh and blood
- vanish into thin air
- pomp and circumstance
- seen better days
- a sorry sight
- neither rhyme nor reason
- full circle
- dead as a doornail
- for goodness sake
- green-eyed monster



Shakespeare's Language

- A mix of old and very new
- Rural and urban words/images
- Understandable by the lowest peasant and the highest noble



Shakespeare's Poetry

We speak in **prose** (language without metrical structure).

- Shakespeare wrote both **prose and poetry** (verse).
- To understand his **poetry**, we need to understand these terms:

Blank Verse: unrhymed iambic pentameter.

Iambic Pentameter: five beats of alternating unstressed and **stressed** syllables; ten syllables per line.

Reading Shakespeare: A Review

Unlocking Shakespeare's Language, by Randal Robinson

- **Unusual Word Arrangements**

I ate the sandwich.
I the sandwich ate.
Ate the sandwich I.
Ate I the sandwich.
The sandwich I ate.
The sandwich ate I.

Robinson shows us that these four words can create six unique sentences which carry the same meaning. Locate the subject, verb, and the object of the sentence. Notice that the object of the sentence is often placed at the beginning (the sandwich) in front of the verb (ate) and subject (I). Rearrange the words in the order that makes the most sense to you (I ate the sandwich).